Northern Messenger

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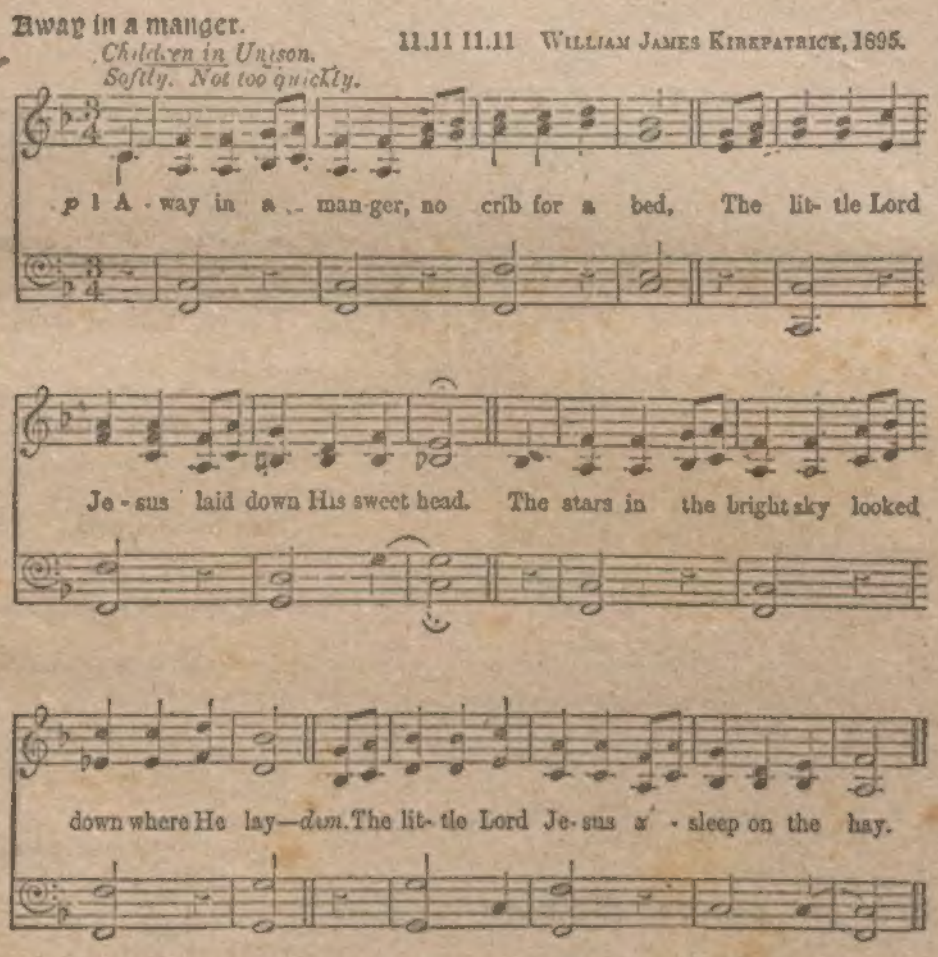
THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM.

She laid Him in a manger.—Luke ii. 7.

XMAS NUMBER

Away in a Manger. No Crib for a Bed.

Away in a manger.
Children in Unison.
Softly. Not too quickly.
11.11 11.11 William James Kirkpatrick, 1895.
p 1 A - way in a man-ger, no crib for a bed, The lit- tle Lord
Je - sus laid down His sweet head. The stars in the bright sky looked
down where He lay—dim. The lit- tle Lord Je- sus a' - sleep on the hay.

2.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
f But little Lord Jesus no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

3.

f Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.
cr. Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.

Translated from *Martin Luther*, 1483-1546.

Merry Christmas.

'Some very good people do not like to wish their friends a "Merry Christmas." The word grates upon them as too nearly a frivolous word. But its original significance was "happy," and in this sense it is often used in the Bible, as where it is said, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." The word has lost something of its old meaning and there is a sort of giddy jingle to the happiness that is now denominated merriment. Still, the old word holds in its place in the Christmas salutation, and, being rightly disposed, we wish the best and purest and truest happiness when to loved ones all around we wish, as we do, a "Merry Christmas."'

The Christmas Spirit in the Coming Year.

Luke 2: 8-20.

Christmas is the red-letter day of the year. Every holiday in the calendar on my desk is in red letters, but Christmas is the grandest, sweetest day of all. Joy pervades the air even though it be chill with snow-flakes. Gladness fills the heart with sunshine, and the face with smiles. Drear and desolate nature owns the sovereign sway of Christmastide, and keeps the evergreen and the holly berries for this festival. Age becomes reminiscent and therefore young, and youth and childhood are buoyant with joy. Every child has visions of happiness as the eyes close on Christmas Eve, and long before dawn the promises are fulfilled. The joy of Christ's presence has full sway on Christmas Day.

Christmas joy comes from Christmas good tidings. An angel messenger started the glad song with the announcement of a Saviour's birth. There is many a soul at Christmastide that knows no deep, true reason for its joy, but the Christian knows as well as feels. The joy of Christmas is the gift of Christ. It will never do to accept the announcement of 'good tidings of joy' without waiting to hear what those tidings are. 'For unto you is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord.' This is the core of Christmas cheer. Salvation is the theme of joy in both worlds. This is Christianity's greatest message to the world, the proclamation of the Gospel of salvation. Isaiah's prophetic soul caught the glory of such a mission and message when he sang, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings.' What the angel began, men have continued to do, and the waste places of the earth are hearing the message of Bethlehem's plains from human lips touched with Divine power.—'Christian Intelligencer.'

Real Coupon Values.

Every 'Messenger' reader should study our coupon values on page 15.

The coupons are designed to fit the needs of each reader. Those whose renewal subscriptions are now due, and those whose subscriptions for the 'Messenger' are not due immediately, or who get the 'Messenger' through their Sunday Schools. Look them over and see the one that will suit you best. You may as well secure their value. The 'Weekly Witness and Canadian Homestead,' together with the 'Canadian Pictorial,' will provide 'Messenger' readers with the best reading and pictures at the lowest prices in Canada.

Christmas of the Sorrowful.

Twenty waggons, backed up against the curb, waited the arrival of the special train at the station—twenty express waggons and a hearse. It was Christmas Day and Sunday, and the drivers were adding a Sabbath day's hard labor to a week, the daily tasks of which had extended far into the night. There were none too many waggons, as the telegram had assured the office, for a vast bulk of delayed Christmas matter was coming on the 'special.'

On the 'special,' too, was to arrive the body of a good man, who had gone away in search of health, and had found it in the land where pain is no more. His son waited the arrival of the belated train, and choked down unhappy thoughts which seemed the sadder because all the world was happy, while he and his household were in grief. He arranged the preliminaries, and waited with the undertaker, expecting every minute that the train would arrive. But the train was late, and it seemed impossible to get word of it. So there was nothing to do but wait and think sad thoughts.

Forty expressmen and drivers waited also. Still the train delayed. An hour, a half-hour more passed, and the time dragged slowly.

Joy to the world! The Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing!

Several voices joined, and all the others listened. 'What a Friend we have in Jesus' followed, and then a number of other Gospel hymns. The sad-hearted man felt himself strangely moved, and drew imperceptibly nearer to the group of singers. At the last they sang, 'Shall we Gather at the River?' and he looked through swimming eyes and saw that the undertaker, too, was wiping away the tears.

'I lost three little ones just a year ago,' said the undertaker. 'Diphtheria. They all went at once; all I had. I've been thinking a good deal when I saw other men going home with Christmas things—'

He choked and moved away, but nearer to the singers, and when they sang the last verse he was singing with them.

Then the mourner forgot his own grief. He, too, had a voice, and in the next hymn he joined the steadily growing chorus. Half an hour they sang together, and when the train came in they all felt that they had been joining in a Christmas service, and that some of the Christmas spirit had come to them.

Death keeps no holidays. No season is exempt from his dread visits. But even to the sorrowful there are sources of comfort. Happy are those who find them, even through their tears.—'Christian Age.'

In the Heart of Mary.

(By Annie Johnston Flint, in the December 'Atlantic.')

Mother of Sorrows, I—
But my Babe is on my breast:
He resteth quiet there
Who bringeth the weary rest;
He lieth calm and still
Who bringeth the troubled peace,
Who openeth prison doors
And giveth the sad release;
For there reacheth Him yet no sound,
No echo of cry or moan;
To-day, little Son, little Son,
To-day Thou art all my own. . .

Mother of Sorrows, I—
And the sword shall pierce my heart;
But to-day I hold Him close
From the cruel world apart.
It waits with smiting and gibes,
With scourging and hatred and scorn,
With hyssop and wormwood and gall,
The cross and the crown of thorn;
The nations shall watch Him die,
Lifted up on the tree;
But to-day, little Son, little Son,
To-day Thou art safe with me.

LESSON.—SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1907.

Review.

Read Psalm 98.

Golden Text for the Quarter.

Thou crowned the year with thy goodness. Psa. lxv., 11.

Home Readings.

Monday, December 23.—Ps. 68, 1-18.
Tuesday, December 24.—Ps. 68, 19-35.
Wednesday, December 25.—Ps. 78, 53-66.
Thursday, December 26.—Ps. 89, 1-18.
Friday, December 27.—Ps. 106, 34-48.
Saturday, December 28.—Ps. 135, 1-21.
Sunday, December 29.—Heb. xi., 29-40.

FOR THE JUNIORS.

Ask questions. Get at what the children remember of the last quarter's lessons, because very frequently the little ones catch at a passing idea, possibly introduced to give the lesson more life, and lose the main point. Moreover, you can only start in teaching from the safe ground of what a child already knows. With the interest that naturally attaches in the mind of a child to other children they will be apt to speak first of the last two lessons, the birth of Jesus, and the boy Samuel. Connect the two by making them understand that both were born in the same country and belonged to the same nation. Speak about how they both understood even when they were still children that God had a great work for them to do.

Of course, we know what Christ's work was, but what did God have for Samuel to do? Samuel lived at a time when his people had no king and were surrounded by a great many enemies. Samuel had to guide and help his people and keep them true to God. He was called a 'judge.' Do you remember any others who were called judges and what they did?

FOR THE SENIORS.

The period of time covered during the lessons of the last quarter is according to the margins of the Bible some 350 years. From the crossing of the Jordan to the settlement of the country in comparative peace at the end of Samuel's administration (leaving out the Christmas and temperance lessons) is covered in ten lessons. Consider what the same time would mean in our own history. It is truly a land of great promise which we have inherited, and the time between the present and its early settlement under Jacques Cartier is of much the same length as the period covered by the quarter's study. We can perhaps better realize the passage of time by this thought. It would be well to take up brief studies of the grand characters, such as Joshua, Caleb, Boaz, Deborah, Ruth, Samuel, and others whom we have come across and consider the qualities that have made them honored through all time. Then take those of less stainless achievement, but still names to be honored, Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephtha. Follow these by a consideration of those whose sins or weaknesses hampered their nation, such as Achan, and Eli. It is noticeable that the sins spoken of, Achan's theft and Eli's indulgence, were what we might call small, but the sin that was promptly checked in the one case would have spread disastrously if unnoticed, and the continual weakness in the other brought down destruction on a family that through it richly deserved such punishment, and the loss to Israel for a time of the Ark of God. All through the story of this time it is rather what the people left undone, that is their failure to follow God wholly, that proved their great snare. Had they at any time mustered courage to drive out the enemy instead of meeting them with an easy tolerance, God would have come to their aid.

This is the last Sunday of the closing year, and the Golden Text is a reminder of this. We are accustomed to speak of how wonderfully God guided and kept Israel in all their difficulties, but are inclined, if not in word, certainly in complacent thought, to look back over our own history and think of how much our own hands have wrought. Let us at the close of this year not only thank God for His care during the past twelve months, but also for the wonderful way in which his hand is evident in our whole history. A little race in a little country were the Anglo-Saxons, but to-day they hold a wonderful place in the world, and God has not given us this for nothing.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, December 29.—Topic—Foreign missions: The coming triumph of the cross: how may we hasten it? Isa. xl., 1-10.

C. E. Topic.

Monday, December 23.—How have I endeavored? Col. iii., 23, 24.

Tuesday, December 24.—Have the Psalms helped me? Ps. 119, 10.

Wednesday, December 25.—Have I learned wisdom? Prov. i., 1-7.

Thursday, December 26.—The prophet's message. Jer. vii., 23.

Friday, December 27.—A lesson from Daniel. Dan. xii., 3.

Saturday, December 28.—A lesson from Solomon. Eccl. xii., 13, 14.

Sunday, December 29.—Topic—Lessons learned from this year's meetings. Ps. 86, 11.

Gifts and the Sunday School.

The high-tide of Christmas joy sweeps over the Sunday school as over the home at this blissful and blessed period of the year. In some schools the children receive beautiful gifts from the Christmas tree, and both teachers and scholars exchange more or less costly tokens of regard. It would seem as if the spirit of Christmas were better illustrated if some portion of the festival were devoted to giving instead of to receiving. Children need training in self-denial, and in that practical generosity which makes it easy to give to those who are not in the immediate circle of kindred and not in the range of vision. Our Sunday School children ought to have the rare pleasure of making others happy in the Christmas season. There are thousands of little ones in the great cities, thousands of others in remote rural communities away from the railroad, to whom the gift of a book, a doll, a knife or a box of candy at Christmas means many times more than it can to young people and children who are almost encumbered with the gifts of Santa Claus.—'Christian Intelligencer.'

The Great Gift.

(By Anna Searle, in the 'Christian Intelligencer.')

A little child before you stands,
And she would tell you how.
Long years ago, in Bethlehem's town,
The shepherds low did bow
Before a Child, a wondrous child,
The Child of holy birth,
Who came the gospel news to bring
To waiting souls on earth.

The Child himself was God's great gift—
A gift of love so vast
That hearts are living still its joy,
Though centuries have passed.
And that is why, when His birthday comes,
Our hearts are filled with cheer,
And gifts of love are sent about
To dear ones far and near.

That's why we're here to-day
With faces full of glee,
To receive from the hand of love
The gifts upon our tree.
Dear Father, in Thy home above,
We would lift our hearts alway.
And to Thee we would bring ourselves
To be Thy gifts this day.

Religious Notes.

The following is the imposing list of heathen customs, formerly prevalent in India and sanctioned by Hinduism, but abolished or reformed by Great Britain. It is worth noting again to see what Hinduism naturally involves:

1. Murder of Parents:
   (a) By Suttee.
   (b) By exposure on the banks of rivers.
   (c) By burial alive. Case in Jodhpore territory, 1860.

2. Murder of Children:
   (a) By dedication to the Ganges, to be devoured by crocodiles.
   (b) By Rajpoot infanticide, West of India, Punjab, East of India.

3. Human Sacrifices:
   (a) Temple sacrifices.
   (b) By wild tribes—Meriahs of the Khonds.

4. Suicide:
   (a) Crushing by idol cars.
   (b) Devotees drowning themselves in rivers.
   (c) Devotees casting themselves from precipices.
   (d) Leaping into wells—widows.
   (e) By Traga.

5. Voluntary Torment:
   (a) By hook-swinging.
   (b) By thigh-piercing.
   (c) By tongue-extraction.
   (d) Bloody and injurious ordeals.
   (e) Cutting off the noses of women.

7. Slavery:
   (a) Hereditary predial slavery.
   (b) Domestic slavery.
   (c) Importation of slaves from Africa.

8. Extortions:
   (a) By Dharana.
   (b) By Traga.

9. Religious Intolerance:
   (a) Prevention of propagation of Christianity.
   (b) Calling upon the Christian soldiers to fire salutes at heathen festivals, etc., etc.
   (c) Saluting gods on official papers.
   (d) Managing affairs of idol temples.

10. Support of Caste by Law:
   (a) Exclusion of low castes from offices.
   (b) Exemption of high castes from appearing to give evidence.
   (c) Disparagement of low caste.

A Roarin' Trade.

The orders are fairly pouring in for the Xmas 'Pictorial' from boys (and some girls, too) all over Canada. Indeed, it is next to impossible to keep pace with the demand. Many a girl who might not like to sell a monthly supply could easily get orders among her friends for thirty-six of the Christmas issue,—nothing nicer as Xmas cards—and so earn that fine passepartout outfit (Dennison's) that we have added to our list on purpose for such a call. Any mother would value such a gift and a couple of brothers could work together and secure it in a few hours. That is only one of the many premiums on our new and enlarged list. Send in your order at once. We start you with six—you get a premium even for as small an order as that—and we send you all necessary information. Don't lose a day in sending for your supply, as they are 'going like hot cakes,' to use our boys' favorite expression. If you are in a hurry for your premium send along money in full at ten cents each and we will despatch your 'Pictorials' and premium at once—20 for a watch, 5 for a chain, 36 for passepartout outfit, 18 for No. 1 camera, 36 for No. 2 camera, 10 for a jolly game, 'Din,' 18 for a fine box of paints, etc., etc., etc.

Address, John Dougall & Son, agents for the 'Canadian Pictorial,' 'Witness' Block, Montreal.

N.B.—Montreal boys may freely take advantage of these offers but must call at 'Witness' office for supplies and must be prepared to pay half price on what they take, premium to be received on payment of balance.

John Huntley's Last Christmas at 'The Three Bells.'

(By Dora Winthrop, in the 'British Messenger.')

'It is now six years since we began praying for John, and he seems more hopeless than ever, doesn't he? I have really lost faith, and rather given him up lately. They say he was in a dreadful state last night again, and what will he be this Christmas? I do not see what more we can do.'

But God had heard their many, many prayers, and was going to answer them in a most unexpected way.

It certainly did appear useless to try to win him. They had made the greatest efforts all those six years; and now, as they said, he seemed as far off as ever.

There never was a special Gospel meeting but John was begged to go to it, and many a time was even fetched, for fear he should keep away.

Now and then he had been taken to a temperance meeting, but not often, for generally he refused to go, lest he should be 'made to sign.'

Of course his home was miserable, though he earned good wages as a bricklayer, and his poor wife suffered dreadfully. Many a night, when he had spent all his money, he would go to her pocket after she was asleep, and take the little she had earned by washing, till she often said it was no use working for 'the Three Bells.'

It was Christmas eve. The snow covered everything with its pure, white crystals, and much was still falling. It did not hinder the regular customers at 'The Three Bells' from going into the hot, foul atmosphere of the tap-room, where they would all stay till they were turned out again into the snow, to reel home with empty pockets and muddled brains.

John Huntley had been amongst the first to go that Christmas eve, and as his pockets were nearly empty, he asked the landlady for a Christmas box, which, of course, she would soon have had back again in return for beer.

However, she refused to give him one, and when telling the story long afterwards he said in his simple way:—

'And that did it. It seemed all to rise up before me—what I was, how I had spent my money, the pounds and pounds I had wasted in that place, and yet the landlady would not give me even a sixpenny bit.

'I then and there turned round to her and said, "God helping me, I'll never take another drop of drink," and I walked out. Some of the men followed me, offering if I returned to stand treat for all I could drink; but I felt God was helping me, and He kept me firm till I reached my own door.

'My wife couldn't understand my being home so early, and when I said, "God helping me, I'm never going to touch another drop," she replied, "Why, you've said that heaps o' time. I'll believe it when I see it."

'I felt vexed with her, though I well knew she had good reason to say it.

'Then I told her all about it, and how my eyes had been opened while standing in the bar of "The Three Bells" as they had never been before; and then I said, "I take Jesus now, this very night, as my all-sufficient Saviour, to save me from my sins and to keep me from the drink."

'My wife seemed to believe in me more then, and began crying like a child, and we prayed together. Still I could see that she didn't feel quite sure, and she dreaded my going out the next day.

'Well, that was a day, and no mistake. All my companions kept begging me to go back from my word, and I kept crying in my heart, "Lord help me, I'm Thine now. Don't let me give in, don't let Satan conquer me." And He heard me, and kept me safe.

'After this, when work was done, I went straight home, and did not go out in the evenings. My wife really looked something like happy.

'Soon after this, my master had some work to do at a public-house, and, of course, I had to go. The smell of the drink seemed to set me longing again, so I just went into a quiet corner, and fell on my knees, and asked the Lord to take away even the least wish for it, so that I could smell it and not want it. And He did; and it has never come back once since that day, and that is sixteen years ago! Isn't He as good as His word?

'I always tell all that go after drink, that nothing else will keep them, but the Lord can and will, if they trust Him.'

This was John Huntley's own version of his turning from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

Just a Whisper From St. Nicholas to the Ladies.

(By Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D., in the 'National Advocate.')

I am the patron saint of Christmas and New Year's Day. In my wallets this year are numberless toys and trinkets, books to be read and trumpets to be blown; but not a single bottle of tipple have I got, even as big as a thimble. I occasionally see in a fashionable liquor-shop window a row of fanciful little bottles, which are labelled 'For Children's Parties.' But I should as soon sprinkle arsenic over my candies or drop a rattlesnake into a lad's stockings as put one of those vials of poison into my pouch. No, my good friends, the crop of tipplers is increasing fast enough without putting one of those stinging serpents into the hands of your boys and girls.

But as my Quaker friend, Broadskirt, says, 'I have a concern on my mind' to whisper a word to the mothers and sisters of my bright-eyed flock. Let me tell you what I spy every night before New Year's while I am on my tour from one chimney and heartstone to another, all over the land. Sometimes Bridget is washing out the big punch-bowl, to be filled next morning with a tempting mixture; or slicing the lemons to mix with the toddy. The lady of the house is counting the number of champagne bottles, and she leaves word for the coachman to go out early in the morning for two more bottles. In one house where I called last year, Mrs. Highflier was making out an order for a dozen of brandy and two dozen of wine; and just then her oldest boy, Rob, came staggering into the hall with an ugly gash on his cheek, where he had fallen against the door-steps. As I flew up the chimney of the mansion, I saw the poor woman wiping the blood from Rob's face with her fine lace handkerchief. That woman has helped to make a half-dozen topers every New Year's Day, and now 'her own chickens have come home to roost.'

I always make a visit at Will Lordly's house, for his children are the rosiest cherubs that ever were tucked into a crib. I unload a big wallet in their stockings. But last year I missed them from the splendid mansion where they always had lived. I peeped into a fourth-story room, to see if any one there was waiting for me; and there I saw the four poor Lordly children lying on a coarse bed on the floor, and their mother sat sewing beside them. Her silk looked shabby, and her eyes looked red. Lordly died of delirium-tremens last year, and his goods were sold out by the sheriff. His hollow-eyed widow won't give any more wine suppers. I slipped a teetotal pledge into her little boys' stockings before I went; but I'm afraid there was no 'Happy New Year' for them.

And now, good ladies, if you could only go with me on my midnight rounds, I would show you sights that would make your hearts bleed. If you could see the poor wives who moisten their pillows with their tears, while their husbands are off frolicking in their clubs; if you could see the miserable mothers who are sitting up till toward the daybreak, for their wild boys to come home; if you could hear the horrible oaths and curses that I have to hear in the drunkards' homes I visit; if you could see where all the young men go after they have got light-headed with your choice wines, and what haunts they enter, you would never put a drop of the accursed drink on your New Year's tables again. There is a little verse in the Bible I carry in my pack which says, 'Woe unto him that putteth the bottle to his neighbor!' There is another little verse that I once pinned on a decanter of rosy Madeira: 'At the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder.' If you will go with me into some houses where raving madmen are shrieking in the delirium-tremens, I will show you the adders.

I am growing old, kind ladies. My beard is frosty, and age brings experience. Let me tell you that I never saw a New Year begun over a bottle of liquor that turned out well. And I never saw the husbands and the sons perfectly free from habits of drink when the wife or the mother is accustomed to set out the glass. And another thing I have seen, and that is, an army of tipplers who got their first glass from the hands of a lady! You have no moral right to tempt another woman's husband or beloved boy to ruin. Our Heavenly Father has given you enough good things for your hospitable boards without bottling up damnation for your guests.

But my reindeer are harnessed. My wallets are packed. A Happy New Year to you all, and to all a good night.

BOYS AND GIRLS

Larkie's Happiest Christmas.

The boys called him Larkie because wherever he was, there was sure to be a good time on. He was standing now with a group of lads just outside the school building. They were all talking at once in high-pitched voices.

'Say, how's this for Christmas?' cried Pete Lumbard, exhibiting a workbox which he had just finished in the manual training class. 'That's for my mothers's Christmas, that is.'

'Good work,' declared Larkie, taking the box and examining it; 'that's all right.'

'I've got my mother one of those lace things for her neck,' remarked Jack Denning. 'You c'n get 'em at Jones' for 25 cents; they'r dandy. Say, Larkie, what you going to give your mother?'

'But Larkie's got the mother, jus' same,' shouted Billy Burbank. 'You'd oughter been round there last night, Pete; we made candy in Larkie's kitchen, and if it wasn't a sight after we got through! we didn't know we's getting it all over everything, but his mother never said a word, jus' laughed—never even made us clean it up.'

'My mother's all right,' declared Larkie, putting considerable emphasis on the last word, 'but she don't want Christmas presents—never does; I do, though'—here Larkie became enthusiastic. 'I want a hockey stick, and some skates, and a stamp album, and a pair of fencing foils, and'—

'Nothing grasping about you, Larkie,' interrupted Billy.

'You c'n get a pair of speed skates at Spalding's for $2,' Larkie went on, too much taken up with his thoughts to notice Billy's sarcasm, 'I've saved up $2 and I'm going to get me a pair.'

'The bell's rung, come on,' shouted Pete, 'it's my turn to lead the line.'

Plans for making Christmas gifts, particularly for mothers, seemed to be in the air that morning, for Larkie had no sooner seated himself in the art class when the teacher came with a calendar which Larkie had finished the day before. 'This is very nice work, John,' she said, 'good enough for you to give to your mother for a Christmas gift.'

'My mother doesn't want it,' laughed Larkie, 'she doesn't care about things—never wants Christmas presents.'

'Perhaps she cares more than you think,' returned the art teacher. 'You can't always tell about mothers. I advise you to give it to her.'

This bit of advice evidently had no weight with Larkie, for when his teacher's back was turned, he threw the calendar over on the next desk. 'You can have it,' he said to the boy who sat there.

For some reason or other the boys did not come round to Larkie's house that night, and as his two sisters were out to a party, he and his mother had the sitting-room all to themselves (Larkie was doing his home work, his mother was sewing).

'Mother,' said Larkie, the art teacher's remarks suddenly coming into his mind, 'if a rich man was to walk in here now and ask you what you wanted for Christmas, what would you tell him?'

Larkie's mother smiled. 'I don't know, I'm sure,' she said. 'I guess I would ask him to get you a new suit of clothes.'

Larkie gazed at his mother a moment. 'Didn't you ever want a Christmas present just for yourself, mother?' he asked. 'Not when you was a little girl?'

'Ye-e-es, I remember once I wanted a doll. We didn't have Christmas gifts when we were children; we were poor, and mother didn't think much about such things.'

'Didn't you hang your stocking?'

'Yes, we did, because we wanted to make out to the other children that we had just as good a Christmas as they had. We used to fill each other's stocking with anything we could get off the farm—apples and potatoes and carrots'—

'O mother,' Larkie's voice was full of distress, 'was that all you had?'

Larkie's mother laughed. 'Oh, we didn't mind; we didn't expect anything. But that time I wanted the doll I was disappointed. I remember how I prayed for it and thought I'd surely get it.'

'And you didn't?'

'No, dear; but it was long ago—you needn't look so disappointed; I soon got over it.'

Larkie was an affectionate little fellow; but when a boy's mother is determined he shall have good times because she didn't have many when she was little, and keeps doing things to make him enjoy himself—just dropping herself right out of sight—is it any wonder that he gets to thinking of himself and forgets her? Larkie gazed across the table at his mother, and it seemed as if he were looking at her for the first time. The little glimpse of her childhood made her seem different, as if she were not just 'mother,' but a person who might want things and be disappointed about things.

This idea clung to Larkie for a long time, and as Christmas drew near, the picture of the little girl who didn't get her doll when she prayed for it, kept coming into his mind. When he went to Spalding's on the Saturday before Christmas to buy his skates, that doll came right between him and every pair of skates he looked at. He tired the clerk all out trying to make up his mind to take the skates and pass out the $2 and settle it once for all. He fingered first one pair and then another, he looked this way and that, and felt of his money; finally, he turned round and walked out of the store, telling the clerk he 'guessed he wouldn't get them just yet.'

In the very next store were the lace things that Jack Denning had told about. Larkie looked at them for some time, and then he thought he would just go in and inquire the price.

'These are a quarter,' said the clerk, lifting a stock from one of the trays. 'These are fifty; these are a dollar. This is a beautiful stock.' The clerk put the dollar stock up to her neck. 'If it's for your mother's Christmas present, I'd get one of these; those others are too coarse. She would be delighted with this. Shall I do this one up for you?'

Whether it was the clerk's manner, or the thought of the doll his mother didn't get, or what it was that made Larkie say 'yes,' he could not have told; but he passed the clerk one of his dollars.

Larkie was smiling when he went out of Jones' store. He told himself that his mother wouldn't want the lace thing, that she would a great deal rather he had his skates, but he kept on smiling just the same.

When one is happy one is very apt to have inspirations, and Larkie had one on his way home. He didn't say a word about it until Monday morning, and then he told his teacher on his way to school.

'Miss Brown,' he said, 'I'm—I'm going to make a—a book. Will you please help me? Somp'n like the one I made last June for the exhibition. I c'n design the cover an' do the lettering if you'll just please pick out the verses. I want them all about a mother, you know; don't you know a verse about a mother that I c'n copy?'

'Why, yes, John, I think I can find you something—I'm sure I can. Is it for your mother's Christmas?'

'Ye-e-es,' replied Larkie. 'I don't s'pose she'll want it, but I'm going to just keep giving her things till she gets so she wants 'em.'

Miss Brown looked as if she wanted to say something nice to Larkie, but she didn't; she just talked about the book.

Larkie's mother woke up with a heavy heart on Christmas morning. She had not been able to buy all the things the children had asked for, and the thought of their disappointment made her dread to see them open their stockings. More than this, there was a feeling down deep in her heart, a feeling she would not for the world have voiced, that her children were a little bit—just the least little bit—selfish. No wonder, with this thought forcing itself upon her, she found herself feeling blue and wishing Christmas was well over.

Larkie, on the other hand, when he woke up, was just in the mood for Christmas. He ran downstairs three steps at a time, shouting 'Merry Christmas' to everybody in the house. He didn't even glance at his stocking or at the little pile of packages placed so carefully beneath it. What did he care for skates or hockey sticks when he had a secret—a secret all his own.

'Wish you Merry Christmas, mother,' he shouted, dashing into the dining-room.

'O Larkie, dear,' his mother's voice was anxious,' I wish you one too, but I'm afraid you'll be disappointed this Christmas. I couldn't get you all the things you wanted.'

Larkie burst into a giggle. 'What do you s'pose I care, mother?' he cried, his voice lifting a weight off his mother's heart. 'I don't want a thing, not hardly. Here comes the girls. Wish you Merry Christmas! Let's have breakfast before we look at our stockings, will you, mother? I want to awfully.'

Larkie's spirit was contagious; the girls forgot themselves and their Christmas gifts, and down they all sat, leaving the stockings to take care of themselves.

'Why! why! what is this?' Larkie's mother lifted two white packages from under her plate. 'Where did they come from?' she exclaimed in astonishment.

The girls looked blank, but Larkie's eyes gave the secret away.

'Larkie! are they from you?'

'Open them, mother.'

It was ridiculous, but Larkie's mother was a little unstrung that morning, she was so tired getting ready for Christmas, and—well, the girls had to help her untie the packages, her hands trembled so. There was a dainty lace stock in the first package, just what she would have wanted if she had ever wanted anything.

'Larkie,' his mother's voice was half reproachful, 'you haven't been spending your money for me?'

'Yes, I have,' the determination in Larkie's voice made his mother smile in spite of herself; 'and after this I'm going to spend all my money for you. Now, mother, please just open the other package.'

The second package contained a book which Larkie and the art teacher had made together. On the cover was a picture which Larkie had drawn of a little girl kneeling with clapsed hands by the side of a bed. Around the picture was a pretty design in blue and gold. The book was dedicated to Larkie's mother. Inside were these words taken from an old English lullaby song. Miss Brown had changed them to suit the occasion:

'My heart is like a fountain true
That flows and flows with love to you.
As sings the lark upon the tree,
So sings my heart, dear love, to thee.
And it's Oh, sweet, sweet! and mother mine.

'There's not a rose where'er I seek,
As lovely as my mother's cheek.
There's not a comb of honey-bee,
So sweet as mother is to me.
And it's Oh, sweet, sweet! and mother mine.

'The queen has scepter, crown and ball,
You are my scepter, crown and all.
For all her robes of royal blue,
More fair your face with eyes so true.
And it's Oh, sweet, sweet! and mother mine.

—Selected.

Sample Copies.

Any subscriber who would like to have specimen copies of the 'Northern Messenger' sent to friends can send the names with addresses and we will be pleased to supply them, free of cost. Sample copies of the 'Witness' and 'World Wide' will also be sent free on application.

Poor Little Teddy and Rich Little Tom.

Poor little Teddy! On Christmas Day
They gave him a cap and muffler gay;
A box of tools, with skates and sled,
And high-topped boots with tops so red.
But what were these? Just nothing at all,
For he wanted a great big rubber ball,
Poor little Ted!

Ted wanted pie for dinner one day,
They were going to have it, he heard them say,
But pudding with plums was what he had!
Oh, poor little Ted! Now wasn't it sad?
His red lips grew to a terrible pout,
He didn't want that, so he went without.
Poor little Ted!

He thought he would try his brand new sled
One day after school, oh, poor little Ted!
For his mother sent him off to the store
As her message boy, and his grief was sore.
How he did hate to mind his mother,
To help her amuse his own little brother!
Poor little Ted!

Rich little Tommy! On Christmas Day
Only one present came his way,
A pair of mittens his mother had knit,
Of fiery scarlet, and just his fit.
Weren't they nice? he asked his brother,
And hadn't they just the dearest mother?
Rich little Tom!

Sometimes he did not have dinner enough,
And folks might think he would call that 'rough.'
But he did not, no, sir! This rich little boy!
Sometimes there was plenty, and then he had joy;
How he loved to help his poor, tired mother,
Or to pray with his darling little brother.
Rich little Tom!

In summer or winter, fall or spring,
He was just as happy as any king;
In winter, 'tis true, he had no sled,
But he slid down hill on a board instead.
When the snow was hard, and glazed with ice
He could steer it 'lovely,' and wasn't it nice?
Rich little Tom!

Tommy and Teddy will soon be men,
Will there be difference between them then?
One will be happy, and one will be sad
No matter how many treasures he had.
Look over this story, black eyes and blue,
And see which one is most like you
Of these two little 'T's.'

—Selected.

Dave Larcon's Christmas Pledge.

(By James March, in the 'Ram's Horn.')

It was Christmas Eve, and the cold bleak winds that sweep the northern parts of Canada, were tearing through a small clump of pines, on the northern shore of Moose River, in Algoma District. Beneath these pines is a homely cluster of shanties, used by a party of lumbermen.

If you, young readers, could quietly have opened the door of the shanty (the door opens toward the north), you would have seen sitting in a corner of the large room, a tall, well-built young man with a light moustache and large muscular arms. This young man I will introduce to you as Jack Cline.

Other sturdy men, but much inferior in appearance to the one I have first mentioned, were there. Old Joe Blunt and Bill Osten were sitting on the log by the fire, while Israel Mott was lounging in his hammock. They were all more or less glum on account of a quarrel with Israel Mott and a few other lumbermen from the other shanties.

'Well boys,' said Jack, 'I wish Davy had not left us. If he ever reaches the Hudson Bay post he will spend the money on whisky which he'd intended to send to his wife and family down in Ontario to buy their Christmas dinner with, and I think it's our duty to try and catch him before he reaches his destination. You know he hurt his foot a day or two ago and I, for one, would not be surprised if he had to lie in the snow until somebody came to pick him up.'

'Oh! what rot!' exclaimed Israel Mott, sitting up. 'He left us over a trifle and it serves him right if he is suffering a little.'

Joe Blunt and Bill Osten gave a grunt of assent and then left Jack to ponder over what had been said. In a few minutes all four rolled themselves in their blankets and were soon sound asleep.

Christmas morning broke clear and cold. The frost on the trees and the snow on the ground made everything appear peaceful and tranquil. Jack Cline was standing at the door of his shanty, buckling on his snow-shoes, in general preparing for a long trip. The other three men were sleeping soundly. Joe was doing his share of the snoring to perfection.

'Hello!' cried Joe, springing up after a final lusty snore. 'Where on earth are you off to, anyway.'

'I am going to find Davy,' replied Jack, sharply.

'And are you going to give up your pleasant Christmas dinner just for that fool?' asked Bill, sitting up.

'Yes!' answered Jack emphatically. 'Dave needs my assistance, whether he is on the way or at the post. Good-bye and a Merry Christmas to you!' and Jack slung his rifle on his back and started out into the cold, frosty air.

Meanwhile, Dave Larcon was making his way wearily along through the snow, his foot was hurting him badly, but he was too proud to turn back, though he did not know how he would ever reach the post.

'Oh God! have mercy on me!' he cried as he fell headlong into the snow. How long he lay there he did not know, but when he awoke it was about 10 o'clock Christmas morning. He tried to get up, but his foot would not bear the weight of a feather. He was beginning to feel cold, too, and very sleepy when a sound reached his ear. It was the voice of someone singing a Christmas song. Dave listened, but not hearing it again, began to think that it was merely his imagination, when—Bang!—the sharp report of a rifle floats across the clear frosty air and in a few minutes the head and shoulders of Jack Cline are seen coming over a bluff not two hundred feet away. Jack carried a rabbit and a nice fat duck.

'Hurrah!' cried Jack, springing to the side of his fallen comrade, but Davy had fainted dead away.

Jack cut some boughs off a young sapling and lashed them together to form a rude sleigh on which he placed his limp patient. After a weary haul through the deep snow, he arrived at the post, where Davy was put in care of a doctor.

Then Jack decided to take a look around. About four in the afternoon he was called to the bedside of Davy.

'Jack,' Davy proceeded, feebly, 'you will find three dollars in my pocket. Go and buy the largest turkey at the post and bring it to me.'

Jack returned in half an hour with a monstrous turkey which he gave to his patient.

'Please bring me a pencil and a piece of paper, Jack,' said Dave. Jack gave them to him and he wrote:

'To my dear wife and the children:

'I have signed the temperance pledge and you will receive two-thirds of my wages every week. I hope you will enjoy the Christmas turkey which I am sending you with this, and I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

'David Larcon.'

A few weeks afterwards, Dave Larcon returned to the camp, after he had recovered from the ill effects of his trip to the post, and nobody ever kept a pledge better than Davy did his. If it was worth Jack's while to save Davy's life, why it was worth Davy's while to make something out of it. And so Davy did.

—New York 'World.'

Christmas Joy.

There is no better time to become like a little child and get ready for the kingdom of God on earth and in Heaven than this beautiful Christmas time. How shall we do it? Yield to our own best impulses. Let our hearts rather than our heads have sway. The little child will be full of Christmas joy, eager in anticipation of the happiness in store for him, planning for the great day. So may

the oldest of us be if he will. Far more than the child's realization of Christmas joy should be ours.

Peace on earth, good will to men is the child's natural attitude toward life. With man it is the victory over selfishness, self-interest, uncharitableness and envyings. That we strive for peace on earth and seek to cherish only good will toward men should make our hearts abound in joy unknown to childhood. The child's heart is full of love, reaching out beyond its little home circle. Its warm nature, fresh from God and full of divine tenderness and sympathy, encircles with love all who come into kindly touch with it.

'A little child shall lead them.' And at the Christmas time let the child's Christmas joy be ours. Let peace, good will and love within our hearts create the overflowing joy that makes glad the world on Christmas morn.—Selected.

A Relative of Santa Claus.

(By Estelle M. Hart, in the 'S. S. Times.')

More than nineteen hundred years ago, there lived, in an Eastern country, a woman named Befana—we will call her by her Italian name, which is so much more musical than the Russian. She was a very neat, thrifty woman, and she had a pleasant little house near the roadside.

One day—it really was the sixth of January, only Befana's calendar was different from ours, and she wouldn't have called it so—while she was vigorously cleaning her house, and stopping, every once in a while, to look after some delicious cakes which she was baking, there came a knock at the door.

Befana opened it, and there found three men, who had evidently just alighted from their camels, standing near by. All of the men were richly dressed, and they carried bundles wrapped in silks of gorgeous colors.

Befana courtesied very low when she saw them, and asked what she could do for them. They told her that they were travellers, who were tired and thirsty, and would like to sit a while and rest, and have a drink of water from her well.

Befana was a sociable body, and was delighted at the opportunity of entertaining such distinguished-looking guests; so she brought out the nicest food which she had in the house, and drew plenty of the sparkling water from her well. Then, as they sat and rested, while they ate and drank, she asked them many questions about their travels, and she found them to be learned and wise men.

When they were ready to mount their camels again, Befana asked them where they were going next. She had learned that they had come from the far East.

They told her that they were following a star, and were going wherever it might lead them. They had seen this star in the East, and it had gone before them all the way.

They told her, also, that they were convinced that the star was sent to guide them to a wonderful Prince, who had recently been born somewhere in Judea. This baby Prince was the Christ Child, who had come to be a king over all the world, and they had brought the richest things they possessed, as offerings to the King—gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Befana's heart was filled with joy at the thought of the little Christ Child, and she, too, wanted to go where he was, and to carry him gifts.

The Wise Men said that she might go with them, but Befana shook her head at that. She must stop and finish cleaning her house, else she never could enjoy her journey.

The Wise Men could not wait, however; but they showed her the direction in which the star had pointed the night before, and told her to keep straight on the western road, and that, after dark, she could see the star and follow it.

Befana bade them good-by with a happy heart. Then she went back into her little house and finished all of her cleaning, until the room shone in every corner, took her dainty cakes out of the oven, dressed herself in her best clothes, and put all of her dearest treasures—for Befana was a generous-hearted soul—into a bundle, taking the nicest of the fresh cakes, also, and started off down the road which the Three Wise Men had taken, to find the little Christ Child.

But, after a while, she came to a place where several roads met, and she did not know which one to take. It was dark by this time, and the stars were shining. She remembered what the Wise Men had told her about the star they were following; but, alas, all of the stars looked alike to her, and no one of them moved to guide her.

Befana walked many miles, trying different roads, and asking all of the people she met if they had heard where the new little King was born. But no one could help her. They told her that King Herod was on the throne, and that there was no new-born Prince in his family.

So, after many weary hours, Befana turned sadly to her own home again. She was very sure that the story of the Wise Men had been true, and that, if she had only left everything and gone with them, while they could have shown her the way, she, too, might have offered her gifts to the Christ Child.

She said to herself, way down in her heart, that she would never give up the search; that every year, on the anniversary of the night when she had tried to find him, she would continue seeking, and would go up and down the land, with the choicest gifts she had, and give them to little children everywhere; then she thought that perhaps, among them all, she might find the Christ Child and give a gift to him.

So the little children are taught to believe that she still lives, and that on every Twelfth Night after Christmas, which is the anniversary of the time when the Wise Men brought their gifts to the Christ Child, she goes to every house where there are boys and girls, and leaves presents for them, thinking, as she goes to each one, 'Perhaps the Christ Child may be here,' as indeed he is in all of them, if Befana understood.

We like to think, as we tell the story, and play our games, and eat our Twelfth Night cake, of the hundreds of children across the sea, who are hearing the same tale on the same night, and of the happiness that comes into their hearts, when Befana, in remembering the Christ Child, brings her gifts to them.

OUR DARLING.

Oh, who is our household darling?
The girl with the golden hair,
With lips like ripe red cherries,
And a face so sweet and fair—
Who comes with a smile in the morning,
Who comes with a kiss at night,
With the voice like a bird at dawning,
With the steps of a fairy sprite.

I saw her this morning, smiling
Through a bower of white and green,
The prettiest little Red Riding Hood
That ever mine eyes had seen.

Never a pout of ill-nature
Spoils that mouth so rosy-red;
Never a sulk or an angry frown,
A word that should not be said;
Ever a thought for the friends she loves,
Gentle, unselfish, and free;
No wonder she's everyone's darling,
No wonder she's precious to me.

—'Little Folks.'

In Christmas-tide.

(By Emma Lente.)

Oh, did you hear glad bells ring out?
And did you hear the children shout
And see the garlands twined about?
The world forgets its woe and sin,
And decks itself without, within,
To hail the Merry Christmas in!

And happy voices chant and trill
The blessed message of good-will,
That cheers the hearts of millions still.
The world forgets its grief and pain,
Puts by its grasping after gain,
And longs for holier things again!

The Christmas Star.

How the Chinese Child Was Guided to Freedom.

(Jessie Juliet Knox, in the 'Tribune,' New York.)

Christmas Eve brought no happiness to Louey Ching. Nothing had ever brought any real happiness to her, for she was a little Chinese slave girl in the city of San Francisco and was not supposed to indulge in the infantile luxury known as happiness.

One need only to have glanced at the cruel face of the old highbinder who owned her, and the shrewd, shifting eyes to know that he would not willingly have conferred happiness upon any one. To him happiness meant the buying and selling of pretty little tea rose maidens and getting a good price for them.

So dazed was the little slave with the many undeserved beatings and cruel words she had received that she seemed to be conscious of only one thing, and that was that she longed to get away from it all. But how could she get away when the front door was always kept locked and the back door only led to some dark steps going up to the roof? It seemed to her the only way would be to go up and jump off the roof. She ran up the steps one day and peered over the edge of the flat roof, which had a railing round it, just to picture how it would be to jump off, but her lingering gaze brought into focus such a new earth that it seemed a pity to end it all when there was such a beautiful world as that below, if only she could get to it.

And now she dimly remembered of once hearing that there was a 'Melican joss' who would answer one's petitions when the idols failed.

Why had this idea never come into her mind before? She would appeal to this new 'joss,' and the sooner the better; so, lying flat on her little stomach, she cried aloud and said: 'Let me go into the new world! Let me not be beaten any more!' and after that she felt more content.

When she came downstairs and into the long, narrow Chinise room, with its meagre and dirty furnishings, she felt almost happy, for in her little heathen heart was the faith of a child.

It was growing dark. She must set fresh food before the Chinese gods and attend to her many duties, far too heavy for a child who at her age should be at play. She must —why, what was it that made her heart almost stop beating, her face grow pale and her eyes go wide with pleased surprise? She had stepped on something—it was that something which made her think that her prayer was going to be answered. It was the bunch of keys, which had never before to her knowledge left the keeping of the old highbinder who owned her. In her small hand she now held freedom.

He had gone and locked the door with the spring lock and had forgotten the keys. It was almost too good to be true. The door was locked and she had the key to that lock.

'Oh, thank you, thank you, beautiful God!' she hysterically repeated aloud, and realizing she had not a moment to waste she cast a hurried glance at the room with its scanty furnishings and said: 'I hate you, prison walls! I hate you, ugly old god! I am never going to come again. I am going to find the beautiful new God who hears me when I talk to Him.'

So saying, she hastily singled out the right key, for she had taken careful note of it many times, and had hated the slender thing which had shut her away from happiness and the peace and freedom of childhood. Into the lock it went. O, joy! it turned as easily as if it were glad to set the tiny prisoner free.

There was not a moment to lose—the old man might return at any time. Trembling with fear, she crept like a hunted thing down the rickety, foul smelling stairway. A rat scurried under her feet, and she almost fainted with fright. She lived a lifetime until her sandalled feet touched the last step, and she emerged into the pure, untainted air of freedom. She could feel that there was something unusual in the air, but did not know it was Christmas Eve. It was all so bright and pretty, but she could not stop now to see it, for she realized that she must get out of the Chinese quarter or her cruel master might find her; so she kept straight on down one street, and walked and walked past gay Chinese shops, rich with Oriental treasures which appealed to the American people, and which would help to beautify many an American home on the morrow; past the joss temples and the huge joss lanterns, with their long, beckoning rays of light; past the shuttered and barred doors of underground homes, where she could catch glimpses of other poor slaves, and on—to something, she knew not what. The night wind was cold and she was tired, for she was not accustomed to walking in the streets.

She was out of Chinatown now, and instead of the smell of incense and opium something delightful assailed her nostrils. She looked up and saw that there were men on some of the street corners, and they were selling great bunches of violets, while from these violets came a delightful perfume. Glancing up at the sky she saw one great star larger than the rest. It seemed to invite her, and to lead her to something pleasant. 'Perhaps it is a lantern the new God has lighted for me,' she murmured. 'At any rate, I will let it guide me.'

And so the heathen child was led and guided by the Christmas star, and pretty soon through a huge window in a huge building she saw another star of light, and knew that she had been guided to this place.

She feared to go in, for she was only a little Chinese girl, who knew only a few words of the language of this strange people to whom the star was guiding her. Following the light, she entered a great building, into which the crowds of people were going, and oh, so many children.

'This must be heaven!' she murmured to herself. Surely it could be nothing else, she reflected, for the inside air was warm and full of delightful perfumes, and the velvet cushions seemed to embrace her tired body like the arms of love. Melodious sounds were coming from somewhere—she hadn't the least idea where. She was almost afraid to look up, for fear some one would beat her or put her out. The poor trembling child did not know it was the birthday of the 'Jesus Baby' those people were celebrating, and that the very spirit of the Christ Child was in the air, and that in the huge church into which she had strayed there would be nothing but love and tenderness for her. How could she know, when she had never known love and tenderness?

Finally she ventured to look up, and now she was sure this must be heaven. She must be dead, after all.

Away in front of her was a big, big tree, all green and feathery looking. It seemed alive, and was covered with wonderful sparkles.

She knew! It was the 'tree of heaven.' She had heard of it before, and on its sway-

ing branches she could see dolls, dozens of them. She rubbed her eyes and pinched herself, but still could not believe she was really alive. She had never had a doll; she never expected to have one, but she was very thankful to have the privilege of looking at them, anyway. It would be something she could always remember.

Just at this point in her reflections a soft hand was laid upon her own cold one, and a soft voice said to her: 'Are you all alone, dear?' 'Yes,' she replied in Chinese. The woman knew that meant 'Yes' by the nod of the head that went with it, and with one protecting arm around her said: 'Then, come with me, and we will sit near the front, where you can see the tree.' The child did not understand all the words, but she felt the love in them and the Christmas cheer in the air, and, clinging closely to the kind woman, she was led up the carpeted aisle, and got a seat close—close to the wonderful 'tree of heaven.'

But, more wonderful still, when she was seated, she found herself in the presence of other Chinese girls, as well as American ones. What could it mean? The woman smiled at her questioning eyes, and listened eagerly, while the Chinise girls interrogated the little one. She soon told them her pitiful story, which they in turn interpreted to the American woman, and she answered softly:

'My dear, the Christmas star must have brought you to us, for these other girls are all rescued slaves, and I am their American mother. You also shall go and live with us, where the old highbinder can never find you.'

The child's heart was too full for utterance, but the radiant face and tear-filled eyes were better than words to one who knew and loved the poor Chinese slaves, and the kind woman understood.

The girls were so good to her and so glad to explain the meaning of it all. While they whispered their words of explanation the music grew louder and grander, until it seemed as if the heart of the slave child would burst for very ecstasy.

Looking high up she saw for the first time the great shining star which had guided her to the place. It must be the same, and now it was resting, radiant, scintillating, on the topmost bough of the tree of heaven, and just beneath it, swaying gently, was the figure of the Christ Child, pink and dimpled, and it held out its arms and seemed to beckon to the rescued one. While she looked some one took a doll from the glittering tree and gave it to Louey Ching. She could not believe it; she only dreamed she had it. She? Louey Ching, the poor slave child, with a doll. Such a reality surely could not be for her. But the girl assured her there was no mistake, and the Christ Child seemed to smile at her, and she smiled back, and said: 'Samon jai! Samon jai! mea wah?' (The child! the child! what is it?) and the girls replied: 'It is the Christ Child, and above it is the Star of Bethlehem—the Christmas star that guided you to us.'

The Children's Festival.

The religion which the wonderful Galilean Teacher brought into the world has given a glory and a significance to childhood it had never known before, and which is not known to-day except where the religion he taught prevails. It is only in the lands that are known as Christian that the sacredness of childhood is recognized and protected by every law and every safeguard that society and government can throw around it. Only in the lands where the name of the Nazarene is held in reverence are the orphans, the waifs, the foundlings, the homeless, neglected and suffering children, taken in, sheltered, taught and provided for with tender, thoughtful and generous care. Under the banner of no other faith are there found such homes as the homes of Christendom; no homes where little feet are so tenderly guided, where the innocence and purity of childhood are so carefully fostered and jealously guarded; no homes where so much is sacrificed and nothing thought too dear that can bring joy, peace and large opportunity and privilege to the children.

Strange, indeed, would it be if Christmas were not the day most loved by children, the anniversary of the birth of Him who is the best friend that childhood can ever know; who loved the children, blessed them, gave His life for them, and to whose spirit and teachings they owe the rarest, choicest blessings that are theirs to-day.—Leslie's 'Weekly.'

Keeping Jesus's Birthday.

(Margaret C. Brown.)

How shall little hearts keep Christmas
When the earth is wrapped in snow?
Little hearts must all be loving,
For in loving, love will grow.

How shall little hands keep Christmas
When the winds of winter blow?
Little hands make gifts for giving,
In this way our love to show.

How shall little lips keep Christmas
When the winter stars shine clear?
Little lips may sing glad praises
To the gentle Christ-child dear.

So may hearts and hands and voices
All together Christmas keep;
Once a child and now our Shepherd,
Jesus, guard Thy lambs and sheep.

'Break it now, that precious ointment of love whose fragrance will sweeten the whole house. Someone has said that 'repression of the expression of feelings is the American vice,' and it is too often true; but Christmas is the very time for turning over a new leaf in the volume of habit, and resolving that love in the heart shall be exalted into love in the life.'—Selected.

Christmas at Sea.

How black the billows loom and leap
From far to far!
Courage, ye boatmen! On the deep
Shall float a star.

Death rides upon the demon blast!
Reefs lure and hide!
Behold the glimmering Feet forecast
Upon the tide.

For dawn! For dawn! Shall ever dawn
Have hope to start?
Behold, two little Hands have drawn
The clouds apart.

What warmth has pierced the winter, sweet
As breath of kine?
O boatmen, lift your hearts to greet
The landward sign!

And in the east what carol wakes
Triumphantly?
Sing, boatsmen, sing! For Christmas breaks
Upon the sea!

—Agnes Lee.

Forget the noise of the city and the worries of the office for at least one day, and listen to the 'Song the angels sang.'

LITTLE FOLKS

Frolic of the Christmas Toys.

(Minna Irvine, in 'Leslie's Weekly')

'Twas the night before Christmas, the house was so still
The fall of a snowflake was heard on the sill,
Fast asleep in their cribs were the girls and the boys,
When out of the stockings came tumbling the toys.
'Twas their last night of freedom they knew very well,
And over each other they scrambled pell-mell,
In the hurry, and scurry, and clutter, and jingle
Forgetting the manners they learned from Kriss Kringle.

The clown on the hearth-rug went flippety-flop,
Where a troop of tin soldiers were spinning a top.
The proud Paris doll to the mirror in haste
Tripped lightly to study the fit of her waist,
And Jack, springing out of his box with a bound
In the automobile went careering around,
Upsetting the clown in his antics so jolly,
And the woolly white lamb, which was nibbling the holly.

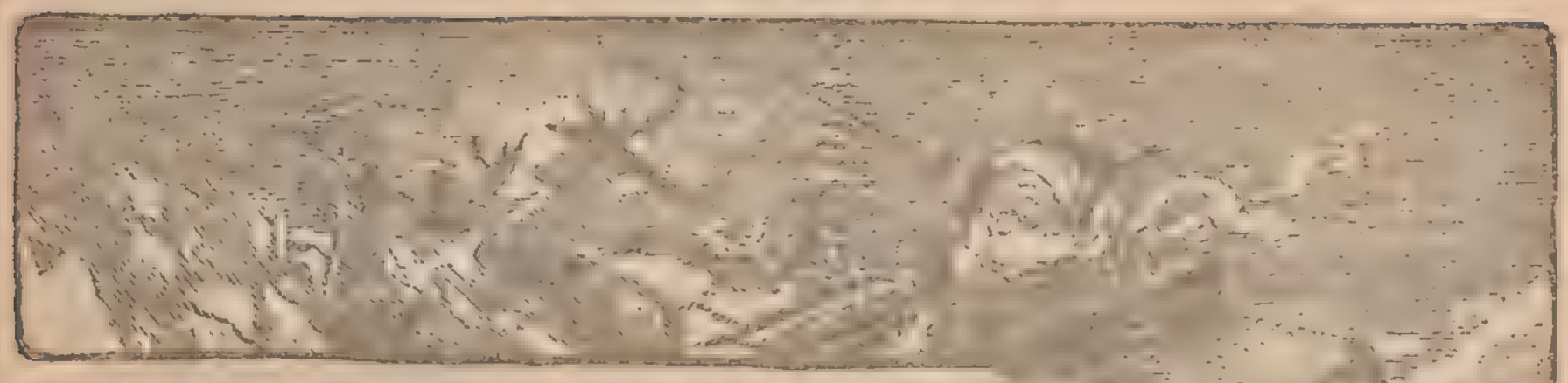
While the trumpet was playing duets with the drum,
The gray of the dawn was beginning to come,
And frosty and clear, o'er the hills and the dells,
Was heard in the distance the music of bells.
The proud Paris doll, having straightened her gown,
Looked disdainfully down on the scene with a frown,
But ere she could languidly murmur, 'How shocking!'
Behold! every toy was again in its stocking.

Lucy's Christmas Pudding.

'There, papa! I have finished making my pudding—my real own Christmas pudding, made of sugar and spice and all that's nice, for that's what a pudding is made of! Now I shall set it to boil.'

'I wonder if a plum-pudding could tell a story,' she enquired, looking round at me, and I answered her look.

'Of course it could, and tell a very old one; for plum-pudding was long ages ago, only plum-porridge, a kind of stew, mixed and eaten in memory of the spice and fruit brought by the Eastern worshippers to our infant Christ; mince-pies meant very much the same thing, and used to be made in long square-cornered tins, to remind those who ate them of the manger in which our infant Lord lay; twelfth-cakes, which were of sugar and spice, with a bean in them, were made to be eaten on Twelfth-night. This was the last of the great days of Christmas-tide, which, according to a law passed in



the days of King Alfred, were all to be kept as festivals, the Christmas log was kept burning, and people feasted their friends. You remember the old carol;—

'"Come bring with a noise,
My merry, merry boys,
The Christmas log to the firing,
While my good dame, she
Bids ye all be free."'

—'Little Folks.'

The Christmas Doll.

(By Eva Earll Furlong, in the 'Youth's Companion.')

It was the day before Christmas, and all the afternoon Marjory and her mother had been sorting out the Christmas things and stringing popcorn and cranberries. Doctor Papa was preparing the tree. 'Now,' said Marjory, if 'Cousin Donald were only here!'

After supper she hung up her stocking in front of the fireplace, and went to bed and to sleep. In the middle of the night something wakened her. She heard a sleigh. She sat up straight in bed. Yes, it was Baby Donald's voice, crying as if he were sleepy and cross. Then aunty's and uncle's voices, and more laughing and whispering before they all went into their rooms.

She slid out of bed, seized one of her own stockings, and slipped softly down the stairs and into the library. As she opened the door she stopped short. Surely Santa Claus would forgive her. She wasn't trying to look, only to make things right for little Donald.

There was her own beautiful tree, with its load of tinsel ornaments and gifts. There in the centre was fastened the most beautiful doll Marjory had ever seen, with a white bonnet with rosebuds on it just like her own. How she loved it right away as it smiled and held out its hands to her!

She quickly hung the stocking up beside her own. She unfastened a big candy cane and a woolly bear and tucked them in the stocking for Donald. Then she walked slowly to the door. She was thinking very hard. She looked back. How the great silver star glistened at the top of her tree! She thought of the star that had shone so brightly that night hundreds of years ago over the little Child of love and unselfishness Whose birthday is our Christmas. She hurried back, unfastened the doll and laid it above Donald's stocking.

'I see you helped Santa Claus,' papa said next morning and when she looked at the fireplace, and there hung two jolly, bulging stockings, her own long one and the baby's tiny one, filled to the brim, but on the top of her tree was a beautiful doll.

'For you see,' said Doctor Papa, 'boys don't care much for dolls.'

A Christmas Lullaby.

The restless clock is ticking out
The hours that go before the dawn,
And icy moonbeams dart about
The snow that shrouds the slumbering lawn,—
The lawn that Santa Claus must cross
Ere he shall reach my baby's cot,—
Ah! who shall measure Bertie's loss
Should Santa Claus come not!

Sleep, softly sleep, my pretty one;
I hear the neighing of the steeds,—
Good Santa Claus has just begun
His round of kindly deeds.

What has the little man for thee,
My precious babe who slumb'rest there?
He brings, sweet one, a gift from me,
A mother's love, a mother's care,—
A mother's care that shall not wane,
While hands can toil or brain can think,
Until that day shall come again
When thou shalt cross life's brink.

Sleep, softly sleep, my pretty one;
I hear the neighing of the steeds,—
Good Santa Claus has just begun
His round of kindly deeds.

He brings a cross, he brings a crown,
And places them on either hand.
Upon the cross thou must not frown,
For some day thou shalt understand,—
Shalt understand the preciousness
That to the sombre cross pertains,
And thou wilt hold the crown far less
Than of the cross the pains.
Sleep, softly sleep, my pretty one;
I hear the neighing of the steeds,—
Good Santa Claus has just begun
His round of kindly deeds.

Good Santa Claus has just begun
His round of kindly deeds.
He brings the greatest gift of all
In bringing thee this Christmas Day;
The deathless love it doth recall
Of him who took thy sins away;
And when no more thy mother's care
Can guide thy footsteps, Baby mine,
Thy steps shall be secured, everywhere,
By love of one divine.

Sleep, softly sleep, my pretty one;
I hear the neighing of the steeds,—
Good Santa Claus has just begun
His round of kindly deeds.

—Selected.

Correspondence

Elphin, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I have taken the 'Messen for a number of years, and like it very It is nice for Sunday reading. We li the little village of Elphin and have much fun in winter. We have snow now, but not enough to good sleighing yet. I go to school every day and am in the fourth reader. We have one mile to go to school. I will close with a riddle, wishing this paper every success: Two m's two a's two r's and a g.

L. P. M.

A., Quebec.

Dear Editor,—It is winter now and we have lots of fun sliding. There will be more fun when the river is frozen over. Then I can skate. I like to skate very much. We live near the river. I have one sister and one brother. I have four dolls and one teddy bear; it is white and is the funniest little thing. We are to have a Christmas tree for our Sunday School.

MARGUERITE REILLY.

O., Ont.

Dear Editor,—We live in the country, six miles from the town of Sarnia, and the St. Clair Tunnel, and one and a half miles from the church and the school, and there are a lot of oil wells around here. We are going to have a Christmas tree for the Sunday School children, and some of them are going to take part in the programme. The weather here is just lovely and I can go to school every day.

EDNA PATTON (aged 12).

I., N.B.

Dear Editor,—I enjoy reading the 'Messenger' very much, and I could not do without it. I have three sisters and two brothers. My eldest brother is in Halifax learning to be a soldier. He is 20 years old, and is the eldest of the family, and I am next. There are six years between us.

I have read quite a number of books, some of which are 'Black Beauty,' 'Beautiful Joe,' 'Pure Gold,' and many others. I will try and answer some conundrums. The answer to the riddle T. M. sent is: It would come o nches. There are 773,746 words in the Bible.

I will send some riddles, which are: How many letters are there in the Bible? What two chapters are alike in the Old Testament? Spell red-runner in three letters.

Oh, yes, there is another riddle I forgot I can answer. It is the one Ethel G. Trent sent; it is: How many times does the word 'Lord' appear in the Bible? It appears, 1,855, and the word 'Reverend' appears but once, and there is another one: Which verse in the Bible contains all the letters of the alphabet is the 21st verse in the 7th chapter of Ezra.

GERTIE GELDART (aged 14).

D., Ont.

Dear Editor,—This is my first letter to the 'Messenger.' I have taken this paper for over two years, and like it very much. Papa gave it to me. I live a mile from the village of D. The church is in the village, and I attend Sunday school every Sunday. I also go to day school. I am ten years old, and I read in the fourth reader, and I attend every day. I have four brothers, a father and mother, but no sisters. Their names are Ne D, John D, Norman A., and Oliver A. For pets I have a kitten, five calves, two colts, and seven little pigs. I have read a good many books, some of which are 'Black Beauty,' 'Robert Hardy,' 'Seven Days,' 'Cat's Appeal,' and 'Jamie.'

MABEL McRAE.

P., B.C.

Dear Editor,—I live on a farm in a very pretty place near the Fraser River. From our door we can see the Rocky Mountains in the distance. We have quite a lot of snow here, and we live near New Westminster City. I am 11 years old and I have four brothers and two sisters. My youngest brother went home to heaven last summer, and we miss him. I am not going to school, but three of my brothers go. We go to Sunday School every Sunday. My father is superintendent. We also have service every Sunday. We go to the Presbyterian Church.

ANNIE C. GILLIS.

[Your riddle has been asked before, Annie. —Ed.]

D., Ont.

Dear Editor,—We have a 3-year-old colt. Last July she was racing around with the rest of the horses, when at night they got into the bush, came racing out, didn't see the new wire fence, and fell over it. None of the rest of them got hurt, but she got her leg broken. They got back to the field, and she couldn't go any farther. In the morning Papa saw her standing in the field, and the other two colts biting her neck and back till it was all swollen up. Right away my brother went for the horse doctor. He said he couldn't do anything, for her hip was broken, but gave us some sort of stuff to rub on it. Papa put a fence around her, and she stayed out in the field. Then in about three weeks she lay down, and couldn't get up until she was lifted. Papa got her in the stable, and made a sling for her, then she couldn't lay down. She is able to go outside now in the day time. We have a large farm of 225 acres. It is a pretty place, named Green Wood Farm, with nice groves growing on it.

RETTA P. RYANS.

A., Ont.

Dear Editor,—We have taken the 'Messenger' in our Sunday School almost ever since I started, and I think it is a very interesting paper. I passed the entrance examination in June, and have not been attending school since, but intend going to public school this winter. My father bought a piano this summer, and I am taking music lessons. We have two cats, named Tiny and Fluff, and a dog named Glen. We had a white cat named Snowball, but he got his foot cut in the mower this summer, and we had to shoot him the other day.

LILLIAN BELL (aged 14).

C., Ont.

Dear Editor,—I go to school and like it very much. We have three lovely goldfish in the school-room. I have a little sister, and she is very dear to me. My little brother has just got over the mumps, and now he is well. I hope he won't be sick again. My mother is going away to London. I went to London last summer and stayed seven weeks.

GLADYS ALLEN.

C., Ont.

Dear Editor,—I am a little boy eight years old. I have just got over the mumps and am out now. I do have lots of fun now. My brother is sick.

FRANK ALLEN.

[That's quite too bad, Frank, positively shocking, dear, dear!]

M.E., Ill.

Dear Editor,—I go to school every day. I have been going one month, but was tardy one morning and did not get my certificate I was 25 minutes late the last day in the first month. My seat mate is Gertie Yeast. There are 20 in school. We have a right smart of fun. We play deer, and andy over. My cousin is out visiting us this winter. She is going to stay until Christmas. She came from Indian Territory. I am still living with my grandfather. We have started the mail route, and our route is number one.

ELSIE WHEAT.

E.P., N.S.

Dear Editor,—I have two brothers and two sisters, all younger than myself. My father goes a-fishing. He is not home yet, but will be about the last of this month. I have eight aunts and twelve uncles and seventeen cousins. Five of my cousins have been visiting me this summer and one is here yet.

MILDRED LENORA GOODWIN.

[Your riddles have been asked before, Mildred. Ed.]

Perth, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I have seen two letters from here, and I know very well the little girls who wrote them. I am ten years old and began attending school last year. I broke my arm last August, but it is as strong as the other one now. We live in a very pretty town, situated on the River Tay, and a branch of the Rideau Canal runs into it. Our home is quite near the C. P. R., and I like to see the trains go by. The Collegiate Institute is opposite our place, and there are a great many fine maple trees along the streets. This is one of the oldest towns in Canada, and some of the trees are very large. There is a new Carnegie Library here, but it will not be opened until Christmas. There are, too, six churches in the town. I go to Knox Church and Sunday School. We think we have one of the best Sunday Schools in the town. Our superintendent is over eighty years old, and we all love him very much. I almost forgot to mention my kitty. She is three years old, and is very playful as well as wise. Also, I have a lovely doll, which I love to play with very much. I could write you a long letter about them, but I am afraid this one is already too long.

ELAINE.

W. L., Ont.

Dear Editor,—I take the 'Messenger,' and enjoy reading it very much. I live on a farm of 25 acres, and we have a horse, a cow, and eleven pigs. My pets are a cat, named Christie, and a pet pig. I go to school every day, and am in the fourth grade. Our town has a canning factory, waggon factory, a post office, and many other buildings of importance. I am thirteen years of age. My birthday is on the 16th of August.

ELSIE RANDALL.

[Your riddle has already been asked, Elsie. —Ed.]

D. H., Ont.

Dear Editor,—I received my Bible on Sept. 12th. I am pleased with it, and will always remember the 'Northern Messenger.' It is a nice paper, and I like it well. I expect to take it for quite a long time. I am nine years old, and go to school every day.

CHAS. MOORE.

T., N.B.

Dear Editor,—I live near the Oromocto Lake. It is very beautiful. Quite a number of people come from other places and spend their vacation here. There are quite a number of fish caught in the lake. Moose and deer are seen quite plentifully around the shores and in the woods adjoining. In the winter farmers cut the lumber and haul it to the saw-mill, which is not very far from our place. I have two cousins who have a grist-mill, about two miles and a half from here. I live on a farm.

J. C. B. S.

OTHER LETTERS.

'Angel Fairchild,' H., Ont., lives in 'not a very large but a very pretty place. I am very busy, as I intend trying the entrance next summer.' This is a riddle enclosed: If all the Hebrew children that Pharoah slew were buried with their right hands up, how could you tell the boys' hands from the girls'?

Jessie McGibbon, C., Ont., says 'We are going to have a Christmas tree. I have written to Santa Claus.' We hope he got your letter, Jessie. Your riddle has been asked before.

Rena Smith, W.H., N.S., writes: 'I do not go to school very much, as I am sick about all the time with asthma.' We are very sorry to hear that, Rena.

Hester Brown, H., Ont., must go for a very different reason. She says 'we have no school here now, but there will be one as soon as we can get a teacher.' Your riddle has been asked before, Hester.

We also received letters containing riddles previously used from Annie A. Fraser, R.R., N.B.; Myrtle Bowman, Lamont, Alta.; Charles H. Cleveland, B., Ont.; Florence Beatty, A., P.Q., whose drawing is very good; 'Betty Anne,' Lamont, Alta.; Elsie Parsons, M., Ont.; and a short letter from Matthew J., Dunbury, M., Ont.

'The Scotch Lassie' will see how very few corrections were needed in her story by looking over it when it is printed. It is very good. Little faults like 'the house he stopped at,' instead of 'the house at which he stopped,' are worth correcting, though.

HOUSEHOLD.

Christmas Eve.

(By Edith Hope Kinney, in the 'Youth's Companion.')

For fear one waif, this winter night,
Should lack a garment's fold,
Bring forth fair vesture, warm and bright,
Lest the dear Christ-child go cold!

Nor let one hungry from your door
Fare sorrowing unfed,
The whitest loaf bring from your store,
Lest the Christ-child faint for bread!

Hush mirth, to hark, this blessed eve,
The wanderer's weakest cry—
The homeless at your hearth receive,
Lest the Christ-child pass you by!

The Ghost Story.

(By Harold Murray, in the 'Christian Age.')

'Now this is like old times,' said Mr. Langdon, as the merry party gathered round the fire. 'Like the dear old Christmas we used to have. That's it, Bert, put the chestnuts on. Get your chairs round, everybody. What if it isn't snowing? We'll imagine it's ankle deep. Now, mother, bring your chair right up here, and we'll imagine the old days back again——' He broke off with a sigh. Was it any use affecting a gaiety he could not feel, when he looked at his wife and saw the shadow on her sweet face? 'The old days.' Ah, there were sweet memories—and sad ones, too, to-night.

The two flashed silent messages across at each other, for as their eyes met the same thought came to each like a chilling draught in the midst of all the warmth and glow of this Christmas Eve family gathering. Mr. Langdon, even while the genial smile so characteristic of him still played on his honest face, was haunted by the tune of a sad old song:

'Where is now the merry party
I remember long ago,
Laughing round the Christmas fire,
Brightened by its ruddy glow——'

'Far away! Far away!' He poked the fire vigorously to drown the persistent refrain. His wife drew her chair closer to him and silently put her hand in his.

A moment later the cheery voice of Bert Langdon rang out boisterously. 'I say, dad, now we're all sat round, let's have the gas lowered and sit by firelight, and you tell us a real, awful, blood-curdling ghost story!'

Mr. Langdon laughed. 'Ghost stories are out of date, my boy. They went with the skating and snowballing, and the old-fashioned waits. And Aunt Mary here won't thank us if we give her the horrors.'

'Aunt Mary'll love it!' cried the boy. 'Why, don't you remember the Christmas when we were all here and the gas suddenly went out, and—and Rob appeared in the doorway in a sheet and——'

There was a painful pause. His father threw him a warning glance. One name must not be mentioned to-night. The boy understood, and in confusion rattled on, 'Go on, dad, tell us one of the good old sort, and make the girls scream, and Aunt Mary howl. Look here, I'll put the gas down. There's plenty of firelight.'

Two dark-haired, bright-eyed damsels who were sitting on stools, with their hands clasped on their knees, made a coaxing chorus. 'Yes, do, please, dad. Something really horrible and Christmassy and creepy!' An older girl and a prim and precise young man who was sitting with her on the sofa in the background, chimed in duet, 'It would be delightful, Mr. Langdon,' and Aunt Mary, beaming through her spectacles, declared that the more terrible the story was the more she should enjoy it.

Mrs. Langdon said nothing. She was in the shadow, and at the mention of a name she had bowed her head, but her hand clasped her husband's the tighter. She could hear some bells ringing in the distance, and every note had its own significance to her. 'Four years.' 'Four years,' they seemed to clang. And then, 'Home, come home.' 'Home, come home.' . . . That that name should be mentioned to-night, of all nights! . . Her thoughts went back to a happy Christmas Eve when her eldest boy was the life and soul of the party . . . to another Christmas Eve, when his chair was vacant, when his disgrace, his dismissal from business, his departure to some unknown destination, his accumulated gambling debts, were like a great cloud blotting out every bit of Christmas sunshine. Four years ago . . . Why, how could she keep back the tears? How could she help thinking of the old hymn,

'Where is my wand'ring boy to-night?'

Ah, where! She was thankful for the shadow.

'Come on, dad!'

Mr. Langdon sat up in his armchair. 'Well, since you will have it,' he cried, 'you shall, and if my ghost story isn't one of the real, genuine, bona-fide, extra-special, horrifying variety it won't be my fault. Listen:

'Many years ago—I will not say 'once upon a time,' it's so hackneyed—there was a castle in Germany in which lived a notoriously cruel baron. Isn't that a good beginning!'

'Prime!' cried Bert. Extremely good,' said Aunt Mary.

'O-o, it is goin' to be creepy!' said the little girls. The young lady and the young man on the sofa preferred to whisper something to each other.

'Years rolled by,' said Mr. Langdon, lowering his voice impressively, 'and the baron died. The castle was shut up. One night a weary traveller, who had travelled many miles, arrived there, and, taking refuge from a storm, discovered a secret passage which ran underneath the moat. Judging the place to be deserted, he determined to follow the passage, and stumbling along in the dark he at length came to a huge iron door. It was unlocked. Still going along in pitch darkness, with rats scampering about his feet (an effective touch, that, thought Mr. Langdon), he suddenly heard a low wailing sound—like this: Ow—ooow—ooow.'

'Really, John!' cried Aunt Mary, with a start, 'you are making me feel as if something is going to happen already.'

'That's nothing!' said Mr. Langdon in sepulchral tones. 'The traveller came to a long, stone staircase, and on each step there was a human skull. On reaching the top of the staircase the wailing noise became louder, and louder, and louder.'

'Don't do it, again, daddy!' pleaded a little voice.

'All right, dearie. But you asked for it. Are you asleep, mother? Well, suddenly he saw a peculiar light. There was a heavy crash. Then a loud clanking, as of chains. And along a corridor there came slowly, slowly, slowly creeping towards him the most horrible figure——'

Mrs. Langdon, who had been sitting quite still, apparently listening intently, suddenly sat up straight in her chair and said in sharp tones,

'Hark! What was that?'

There was a dead silence. They sat in the semi-darkness holding their breath. The interruption was so dramatic, so genuinely alarming, that no one dared to speak, until Mr. Langdon in a low voice asked 'What do you mean, dear?'

'A knocking,' she said. 'I thought I heard a knock at the door. Listen! . . .'

They listened, and they could hear the beating of their own hearts. They wished they had never asked for the ghost story. A game would have been much better.

'Oh,' said Bert, the first to recover from the feeling of alarm that had seized on them all, 'it's imagination, mother. Dad's telling the story so well. There'll be no one at the door to-night.'

'Well,' said Mr. Langdon, 'I'll finish at once, and then we'll let a little light on the subject. The man stood—shaking with horror as the apparition crept towards him, not daring to move hand or foot, when——'

'There it is again!' Mrs. Langdon this time rose and laid a trembling hand on her husband's shoulder. The young man on the sofa, who had been paying very little attention to the story, was nearest to the door, and jumped up, saying, 'I'll go and see what it is, Mrs. Langdon. It may be only the wind.' He ran to the door. With hasty steps and trembling with excitement Mrs. Langdon followed, while the others seemed tied to their chairs. Outside in the passage the young man returned from the door in less than a minute.

'Some poor starved tramp,' he said, shortly. 'Almost too far gone to say what he wants. He——'

But the mother had rushed past him. It all happened in a moment. Her arms were round the tramp. Her kisses were falling on his rough, thin, sunken face, and between her sobs she was crying:

'My Rob! My Rob! Home, come home! Home at last, Rob!'

The tramp made two steps inside the door-way, and on the threshold, just opposite to a gaily-decked motto, 'Welcome home,' he fainted. The young man who had opened the door stood staring in bewilderment. Mr. Langdon and the members of the family came crowding into the hall to see what was the matter.

The snow had begun to fall. The bells rang out clear and musical. A stolid policeman who had watched a wanderer dragging his weary steps to the house, and was prepared to charge him with vagrancy, saw the door close, gave a grunt of amazement, and resumed his beat thinking deeply. A merry party of waits came round the corner with a wheezy harmonium and began to lustily send forth, in friendly competition with the bells, the dear old strains:

'Hark, the herald angels sing.'

And that was how God brought Rob home.

Christmas Materialism.

(By Helen R. Robb, in the 'Presbyterian Banner.')

We all realize the increasing tendency to make the Christmas celebration a time of barter, of nervous strain, of rivalry in trade, of grievous burden to public servants from the cash boy in the department store to the Postmaster General, instead of the period of happy good-will and merriment, of unselfish bounty and thoughtful kindness, of peaceful, holy thought which its origin teaches us it should be. And we also feel the importance of considering how we may secure for children those impressions and influences at the festival which he whose birthday we tell them we are keeping would have them get from it. The one section of the wide subject that I would present is the personality of that beloved and revered friend of our childhood Santa Claus. May prosperity and happiness attend him, and may the time never come when this wise old world will grow so enlightened as to cease to welcome his visits with all the frolic which his own loving heart so delights in. What I fear for him is that he is being misrepresented year by year at the hands of his best friends.

Santa Claus is the spirit of loving giving. His coming is mysterious, for love delights in concealing itself when it gives. Is he not maligned when coarse buffoonery masquerades in his name in the homes and even in the churches? His representation is gross and often terrifying to the smallest children. Is it not wiser to allow him to be shrouded in delightful mystery, a merry, jolly elf that comes only when children are asleep, and is never seen; a being whose spirit we can all imitate by our carefully prepared surprises. The pictures in books and figures in shop windows are what some people think he may look like, but no one ever sees him.

Santa Claus is the children's own saint, and

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Very handy for school use—or for the work bag. Free for only two new subscribers to the 'Messenger,' at 40 cents.

REMEMBER! All the above premium offers are for absolutely new subscriptions at 40 cents each. Two renewals at 40 cents to count as one new subscription. Further particulars cheerfully given. Sample copies, and subscription blanks fully and promptly sent on application.

Remit the correct number of subscriptions for any of the above offers. Name your premium clearly and it will be sent at once. Address, John Dougall & Son, Publishers of the 'Northern Messenger.' 'Witness' Block, Montreal.

P.S.—In any of the above offers one NEW subscription to the 'Weekly Witness and Canadian Homestead,' at $1.00, will be taken as equal to two 'Messengers,' or one NEW subscription to 'World Wide,' at $1.50, as equal to three 'Messengers.'

WATCH FOR OTHER PREMIUMS NEXT WEEK.

they have made him mysterious, mystical. Why do we make him gross, material, and manifest when his mystery constitutes so much of his charm? A saint is elevated that we may emulate his virtues. Above all, in our Christmas preparations let us not forget to encourage the children in giving. Again and again we have seen their gladness in making others glad, yet too often we are careless about planning that they may have this privilege. Last Christmas some tots from three to six years old, all coming from homes of the deepest poverty, were asked to give some of the pennies which, strangely enough, such children always have for buying candy, to get a present for a sick child in a certain hospital. On the day of their Christmas festival nothing gave them such happiness as the opening of the gift their little sacrifices had bought for the sick child they had never seen. Their joy went up in a united sound that was almost a cry. I am sure that note of joy was echoed in the heart of the Lord Jesus himself, who came to our world not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

The delight of children in playing Santa Claus, concealing their preparations in a mystery like his, is boundless. As the years pass this mystical being comes to mean to them the true giving spirit, and there is no disappointing shock when some rude, unpoetic, but well-meaning friend tells them 'there is no Santa Claus.' Thank God that in our good country there is a Santa Claus for every little child, but this does not necessarily imply that all are visited by a boisterous, rollicking, red-faced, big-whiskered gift-giver who crams them with candy till they are sick, and loads them with toys till their little mental apparatus aches with the effort to appreciate the beauty and comprehend the mechanism of the same, and till they are scolded for being cross and 'naughty' by some big people who don't give sufficient thought to the relation between cause and effect.

'MESSENGER' PATTERNS

FOR THE BUSY MOTHER.

BOYS' BATH ROBE.—NO. 5216.

A most comfortable and easily made garment, that will be appreciated by the boy of the family, is shown in this design for a bath robe. It is fitted by shoulder and under-arm seams, and straps of the materials are stitched to the side seams, through which a fancy cord is passed, tying in front. As shown in the illustration, a rolling collar was used, but a broad sailor collar may be substituted, as both are included in the pattern. It was developed in striped elderdown, although other materials such as flannel, and Turkish towelling are suitable for the making. Woollen blankets that come expressly for the purpose are also used. The medium size will require 2 1-4 yards of 54-inch material. Sizes for 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14 and 16 years.

'NORTHERN MESSENGER' PATTERN COUPON.

Please send me

Pattern.	Size.
No..	... .
No..	....
No..	... .
No..	... .

for which I enclose .. .. .. cents

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N.B.—It is always safer to cut out illustrations and send with the coupon, carefully filled out. Allow one week beyond time needed for return of post, as orders are handled in rotation. Price, 10 cents, in stamps or postal note. Address 'Northern Messenger' Pattern Department, 'Witness' Block, Montreal.

'Weekly Witness and Canadian Homestead.'

Coupon No. 1. Worth 35c.

Enclosed please find 65 cents, which, with this coupon, worth 35 cents, will pay for the 'Weekly Witness and Canadian Homestead' for one year. I get the 'Messenger' at our Sunday School, but have not been taking the 'Witness.'

Name.. .. ..

Address.. .. ..

Date.. .. ..Prov. .. ..

EXTRAORDINARY OFFERS.

Where ONE of the papers taken is NEW for person subscribing.

'Canadian Pictorial.'

Coupon No. 2. Worth 35c.

Enclosed please find 65 cents, which, with this coupon, worth 35 cents, will pay for the 'Canadian Pictorial' for one year. We get the 'Messenger' at our Sunday School, but I have not taken the 'Pictorial' before.

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Address.. .. ..

Date.. .. ..Prov. .. ..

All 'Northern Messenger' readers will be interested in the extraordinary offers represented by the coupons on this page. Their own paper and one or other or both of the following:—

'WEEKLY WITNESS and CANADIAN HOMESTEAD' $1.

The 'Witness' gives all the news that is worthy the attention of the average reader. It keeps its readers well informed on all subjects of interest. The cable, the telegraph, and the telephone, together with a staff of competent editors and reporters, all unite to make its news columns second to none.

The 'Witness' editorial pages are acknowledged by its readers on all sides to be both fair and forceful.

Reliable commercial news and quotations of the money, stock, and produce markets are features that make it of great value in the world of commerce, finance, and agriculture.

All right thinking people appreciate such a paper as the 'Witness,' standing as it does for all that is best in Journalism. Latest News, Market and Stock reports, Literary Review, Good Stories, Boys' Page, Queries on all subjects, departments for "The Home,' 'Children's Corner,' 'Agricultural,' "The Garden,' 'Poultry' (conducted by Macdonald College expert), 'Veterinary,' etc., etc. A clean business and home newspaper. Suits every member of the family. Indispensable to the farmer. Invaluable in any calling. Once a subscriber, always a friend.

Many of the best men and women of Canada are proud to acknowledge that they were "brought up on the 'Witness.'"

'CANADIAN PICTORIAL' $1.00 a Year

The best printed magazine in Canada, crowded with the most interesting pictures of recent happenings, pictures of beautiful or curious things, portraits of people in the public eye, snap shots, etc., etc. Next best thing to travelling and seeing people, places and events with one's own eyes. The 'Canadian Pictorial' has simply bounded into popularity, and to-day boasts a larger circulation than any other magazine in Canada. It contains about a thousand square inches of pictures in each issue, and costs to produce about a thousand dollars each issue—sometimes considerably more.

The more people are educated, the more they appreciate and value pictures of current events, for they convey so much information in so short a time. But the children also profit by and enjoy them, and the 'Pictorial' thus appeals to every member of the family.

The press of Canada, from coast to coast, has said the nicest things about the 'Canadian Pictorial.' Here are two or three specimens:

It is beautifully printed. A most creditable production.—'Herald,' Yarmouth, N.S.

Every illustration is a work of art—some of its pictures fit for framing.—'Mining Record,' N.S.

It is filled with splendidly executed photogravures.—'Times,' St. John, N.B.

It bears out its undertaking to give its patrons only the highest class of work and certainly offers them the maximum of pictures.—'Star,' Toronto, Ont.

The pictures in the 'Pictorial' are among the finest that have been produced.—'World,' Vancouver, B.C.

BOTH FOR ONE DOLLAR WITH COUPON No. 3.
The 'Messenger' and one of the above with Coupon No. 4.
The 'Messenger' and both of above with Coupon No. 5.
Coupons 1, 2 and 3 for S. S. Teachers and Scholars.

Coupon No. 3. Worth $1.00.

'Canadian Pictorial.'
'Weekly Witness and Canadian Homestead.'

Enclosed please find $1.00, which, with this coupon, worth $1.00, will pay for the 'Weekly Witness and Canadian Homestead' and the 'Canadian Pictorial' both for one year.

Name.. .. ..

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Date.. .. ..Prov. .. ..

Coupon No. 4. Worth 40c.

'Canadian Pictorial,'
with 'Messenger,' OR
'Weekly Witness and Canadian Homestead,'
with 'Messenger.'

Enclosed please find $1.00, which, with this coupon, worth 40 cents, will pay for the 'Northern Messenger' and the*.....
.....for one year.

Name.. .. ..

Address.. .. ..

Date.. .. ..Prov. .. ..

*Insert here the name of whichever of the two above-mentioned papers is wanted along with the 'Messenger.'

Coupon No. 5. Worth $1.25.

'Northern Messenger.'
'Weekly Witness and Canadian Homestead.'
'Canadian Pictorial.'

Enclosed please find $1.15, which, with this coupon, worth $1.25, will pay for the three papers mentioned above, one year each.

Name.. .. ..

Address.. .. ..

Date.. .. ..Prov. .. ..

THE ONLY CONDITIONS WITH ABOVE RATES ARE:—1. That subscription MUST be sent on one of these coupons; and (2) that one at least of the papers in any combination must be NEW to the person remitting.

Send in postal note, money order, or registered letter to JOHN DOUGALL & SON, Publishers of 'Weekly Witness and Canadian Homestead,' and agents for the 'Canadian Pictorial.' Address, 'Witness' Block, Montreal.

To Renew Old Mattings.

It is very poor economy to buy the very cheap mattings, though they are very pretty and serviceable to a certain extent, but a good, firmly woven matting will last as long as a good carpet, if carefully used, it is far more easily kept clean than any other floor covering, and then it is more healthful, less work, and cheaper.

Housecleaning usually reveals the fact that some of the mattings are too worn for further use, but sometimes an old matting can be made to do duty for another season, by changing the widths from the centre to the sides allowing the sides to come to the centre where there is more wear. When an old matting is to be put down again, it can easily be freshened if not very much soiled, by wiping the surface with warm water containing a handful of salt to a pailful of water. If there are any grease spots found on good matting, cover them with a thin paste made with fuller's earth and cold water, and allow it to remain for two or three days before sweeping off.

A matting that had been in use for four years but was still good, was swept thoroughly on the right side, then the tacks were removed, each width rolled up and taken out doors and laid on the ground right side down and swept until no more loose dust would sweep off, then it was tacked to a clean dry floor, and given a thorough scrubbing with a strong lather of good soap and warm soft water, and as a small portion was cleaned it was rinsed with clear water and rubbed as dry as possible with clean, soft cloths. When the matting was perfectly dry it was fresh and clean looking and it is kept clean, by brushing every day with a soft broom, and once a week the rugs are taken out and hung over the line and beaten with limber switches, then the matting is swept clean and wiped off with a damp, not wet cloth, the rugs replaced and the room is as fresh as possible.—A. M. H., in 'Religious Telescope.'

Holiday Gifts

Every one fond of fancy work will appreciate these patterns, which are in full size on cambric, and may be used over and over again. As an additional accommodation for readers out of the reach of lace supplies, we can send materials also. Read directions carefully and send the correct amount in money order or registered letter. Stamps for small amounts.

Readers will bear in mind that the materials we supply are not cotton, but the best imported linen throughout, so that if the cost is higher than the braids ordinarily sold, the quality fully makes up for it in beauty of appearance and in durability.

Design No. 27.

FINE LINEN CENTREPIECE IN BATTENBERG REAL LACE.

Sizes of Centrepiece, 13, 15, 18 and 21 inches.

Each season it seems as if we were being offered more and more exquisite creations of fine linen. Articles of finer lace and embroideries are used in greater varieties and in more expensive qualities and more and better handwork is being lavished upon them. In spite of the costliness of such fine work in the shops the ambitious housekeeper realizes that these dainty things may be enjoyed at less than half their cost, if she works them herself. The work is not at all difficult to accomplish. With the aid of our full size cambric pattern (each pattern accompanied by illustrated working directions) which we offer for the above design as follows:

No. 1—Thirteen inches pattern, 15 cents; material, in best imported linen, 35 cents extra, or material for two, and the pattern or only 75 cents. Material needed, 14 yds. No. 2 braid, 12 rings, 1 thread. f

No. 2.—Fifteen inches; pattern, 18 cents; material, 45 cents extra. (17 yds. No. 2 linen braid, 12 rings, 1 thread).

No. 3.—Eighteen inches; pattern, 20 cents; material to work, 50 cents extra. (21 yds. linen braid, No. 2, 20 rings, 1 thread.)

No. 4.—Twenty-one inches; pattern, 20 cents; material, 70 cents extra. (30 yds. linen braid, No. 2, 24 rings, 2 thread).

Address 'Northern Messenger' Pattern Department, 'Witness' Office, Montreal.

Answering Advertisements.

If 'Messenger' readers ordering goods advertized in the 'Messenger' will state in their order that they saw the advertisement in the 'Messenger,' it will be greatly appreciated by all concerned.

You cannot possibly have a better Cocoa than

EPPS'S

A delicious drink and a sustaining food. Fragrant, nutritious and economical. This excellent Cocoa maintains the system in robust health, and enables it to resist winter's extreme cold.

COCOA

Sold by Grocers and Storekeepers in ¼-lb. and ½-lb Tins.

BIG Beauty Doll

HANDSOMELY DRESSED

GIVEN FREE

For selling only 25 pieces of our fast selling Jewelry Novelties to your friends and neighbors at 10 cents each and sending us the $2.50 collected when sold.

Send us your name and address and we will mail to you at once 25 pieces of our fast selling Jewelry Novelties, which you can easily sell to your friends and neighbors at the small price of 10 cents each as they are such good bargains at that price and when you have them all sold send us the $2.50 and we will mail at once to your address this Big Beauty Doll, handsomely dressed; we trust you with the 25 Jewelry Novelties until they are sold so it will cost you nothing toobtain this handsome Doll neatly dressed from head to feet; with large picture hat, sash with buckle, dainty shoes and stockings, pretty dress of silkoline and lace and with long natural curls and sleeping eyes which close when you lay Dolly down.

All we ask is that you will try and sell the 25 Jewelry Novelties as soon as possible after you receive them and send us the $2.50 collected when sold and we will mail this Big Beauty Doll to you the same day we receive the money carefully packed and all charges paid.

Send Name and Address for the 25 Jewelry Novelties to-day.

FULL JOINTED BODY

SLEEPING EYES

STAR Mfg. CO., 246 St. James St., Montreal, Can.

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$12 WOMAN'S FALL SUITS, $6 50

Tailored to order. Also Suits to $15. Send today for free Cloth Samples and Style Book.
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SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFER.

Any school in Canada that does not take 'The Messenger,' may have it supplied free on trial for three weeks on request of Superintendent, Secretary or Pastor, stating the number of copies required.

THE 'NORTHERN MESSENGER' is printed and published every week at the 'Witness' Building, at the corner of Craig and St. Peter streets, in the city of Montreal, by John Redpath Dougall and Frederick Eugene Dougall, both of Montreal.

All business communications should be addressed 'John Dougall & Son,' and all letters to the editor should be addressed Editor of the 'Northern Messenger.'